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# *THE CRIMSON SEA*



# Look who's in LION



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The amazing metal man

## **BILLY THE KID**

The fastest gun in the West

## **PADDY PAYNE**

Warrior of the Skies

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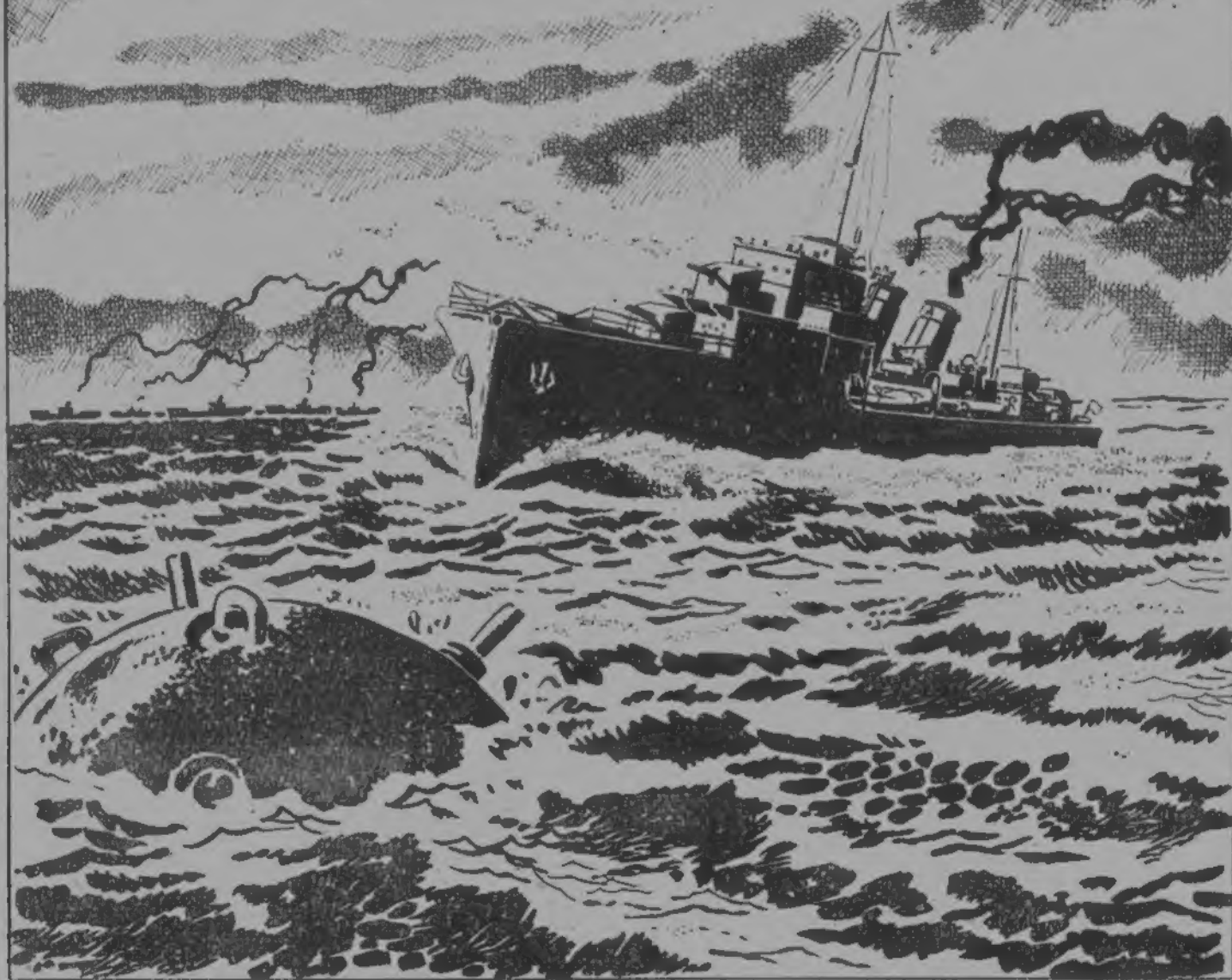
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FIVE STAR WEEKLY



# *The* **Crimson Sea**

IN THE GREY WINTER OF 1942, BATTLE-SCARRED CONVOYS OF SHIPS CLAWED THEIR WAY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC OCEAN WITH LEAN, SALT-GRIMED DESTROYERS CIRCLING PROTECTIVELY. BUT AGAINST THE DEVILISH CONTACT MINES THAT WERE STREWN IN THE CONVOY ROUTES THERE WAS LITTLE DEFENCE.



## Chapter 1.

## PANIC

H.M.S. GRAPNEL, A G-CLASS DESTROYER OF 1,750 TONS, HAD BEEN AT SEA FOR TWENTY-SEVEN DAYS, WITH NO MORE THAN A FEW HOURS AT LONDONDERRY FOR RE-FUELLING. ON THE PORT WING OF THE BRIDGE, ABLE-SEAMAN HEWITT WAS ALLOWING HIMSELF PLEASANT THOUGHTS OF LEAVE, WHEN HE SAW THE MINE....

MINE! BEARING RED-O-ZERO-ONE! DISTANCE TWENTY YARDS!



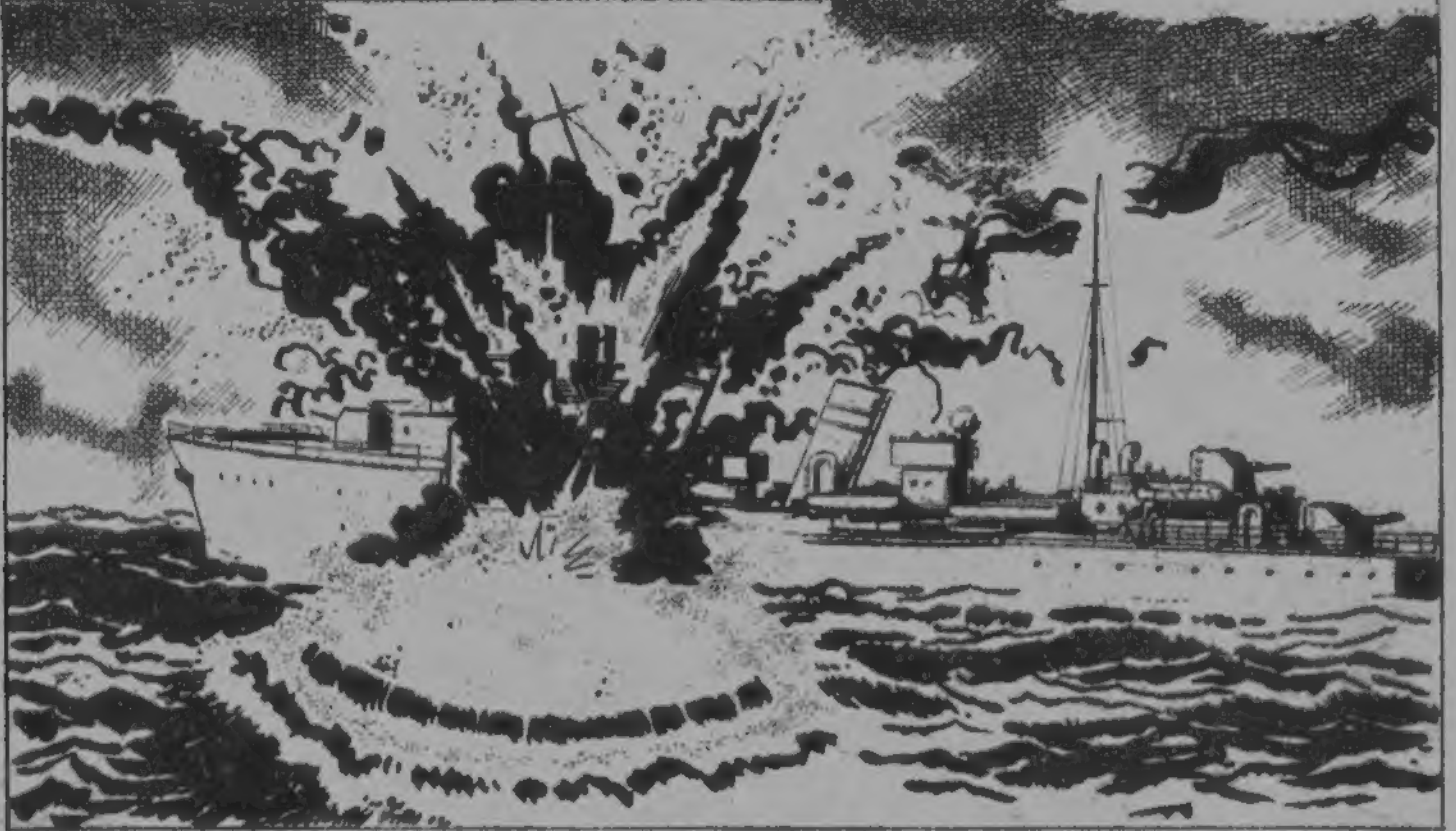
LIEUTENANT WAYMAN, THE OFFICER OF THE WATCH THUMBED HARD DOWN ON THE ALARM SIGNAL, AS HIS SKIPPER, CAPTAIN TREVOR JARDINE, R.N., ISSUED QUIET BUT RAPID ORDERS.

STOP STARBOARD, EMERGENCY FULL AHEAD PORT! HARD-A-STARBOARD WITH THE WHEEL, COX'N!

THE MINE'S RIGHT UNDER OUR PORT BOW, SIR!



UNDER THE COMBINED EFFECT OF ENGINES AND RUDDER, THE GRAPNEL HEeled OVER AND SLEWED SIDEWAYS! BUT IT WAS TOO LATE TO ESCAPE THE HORNEd MESSENGER OF DEATH!



PARALYSED, THE DESTROYER STOPPED DEAD IN HER TRACKS...





## The Crimson Sea

AS CHIEF PETTY OFFICER MCKAY MADE HIS REPORT TO THE BRIDGE, THE FIRE IN THE GALLEY FLAT GAINED HOLD AND BURST THROUGH THE BULKHEAD NEXT TO THE MAGAZINE BELOW 'A' GUN TURRET....

FULL ASTERN BOTH! WHEEL AMIDSHIPS! I INTEND TO STEAM AS FAR FROM THE CONVOY AS I CAN, COX'N — THERE'S A FIRE FORWARD AND WE WILL BE A SIGNAL BEACON FOR EVERY U-BOAT FOR MILES!



DOWN BELOW IN THE W/T OFFICE, ORDINARY TELEGRAPHIST PETER WAYMAN, YOUNGER BROTHER OF THE OFFICER ON THE BRIDGE, HAD BEEN ALONE ON WATCH WHEN THE GRAPNEL HIT THE MINE. WHITE-FACED, TREMBLING, HE LOOKED AT JACK MORNEY, THE LEADING HAND OF THE WATCH...

WHAT—WHAT'S HAPPENED, HOOKEY? HAVE WE BEEN TORPEDOED? ARE — ARE WE SINKING?

TAKE IT EASY, PETE! THE SKIPPER WILL SOON LET US KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING! YOU SIT TIGHT IN CASE THERE'S SIGNALS TO SEND. I'LL BE BACK IN A MINUTE!



LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES FROM THE SCENE OF THE GRAPNEL'S AGONY, THE PERISCOPE OF A SUBMARINE FEATHERED THE SURFACE, ITS CYCLOPS' EYE TURNING SLOWLY...

SHIP ON FIRE  
ON HORIZON. WE'LL  
TAKE A CLOSER LOOK!  
BLOW TANKS TWO AND  
FOUR AND TRIM TO  
THIRTY FEET. STAND BY  
FOR TORPEDO  
ATTACK!



THE U-BOAT CLOSED THE MORTALLY  
WOUNDED GRAPNEL...

IT IS A CONVOY ESCORT!  
WE WILL FINISH HER OFF AND  
THEN RAID THE CONVOY—IT  
CAN'T BE FAR!



TUBES ONE AND  
TWO READY FOR FIRING!  
FOUR OTHER U-BOATS HAVE  
BEEN RADIOED AND ARE  
CLOSING IN. HERR  
KAPITAN!

WITH THE FIRE RAGING FORWARD, HER  
ASDIC GEAR SMASHED, THE GRAPNEL  
RECEIVED NO WARNING OF THE NAZI  
KILLER SO CLOSE BENEATH THE WAVES.

CAN'T YOU GET  
THAT FIRE OUT,  
WAYMAN?



THE DAMAGE  
CONTROL PARTY ARE  
MAKING SOME HEADWAY,  
SIR, BUT THE ENGINE-ROOM  
SAY THEY CAN'T HOLD  
OUT MUCH LONGER!

## The Crimson Sea

THE DAMAGE CONTROL PARTY SWEATED AT THEIR TASK, THEIR FACES GLISTENING IN THE MACABRE LIGHT OF THE FIRE....

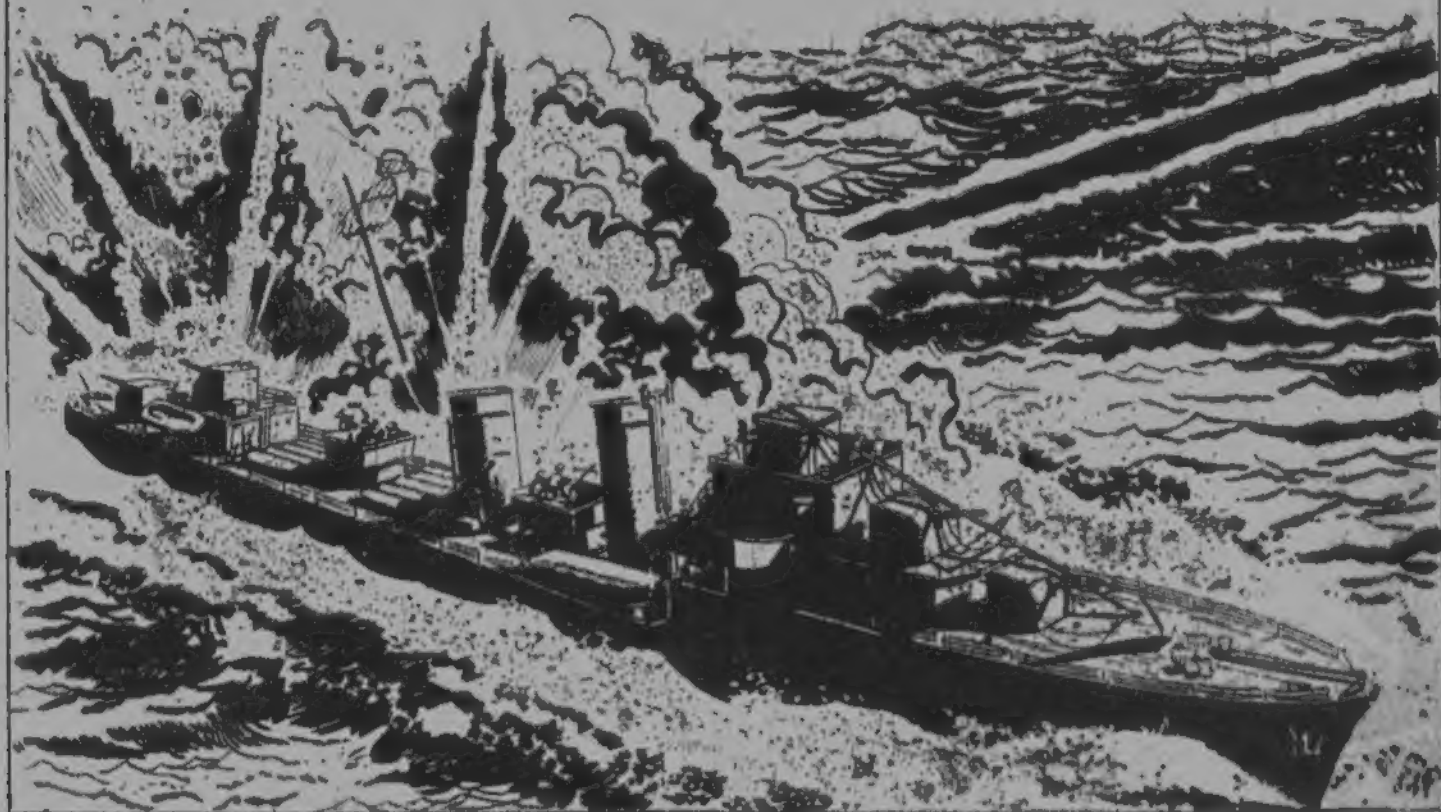


THE DESTROYER WAS NOW ON BORROWED TIME — DEATH WAS FIFTEEN SECONDS AWAY....





THE FIFTEEN SECONDS HAD PASSED! WITH A SHATTERING ROAR A TORPEDO RIPPED INTO THE STERN OF THE GRAPNEL...



THE DECK TILTED CRAZILY, AND THE HEAVY ATLANTIC SWELL FLOODED OVER THE GUARD RAILS. IN THE W/T OFFICE, PETER WAYMAN RIPPED OFF HIS HEADPHONES....



CHIEF! MORNEY'S D-DEAD! HE'S ON THE DECK IN HERE!

STAY WHERE YOU ARE, SON! YOU'LL GET YOUR ORDERS FROM THE BRIDGE! THERE'LL BE SIGNALS TO SEND!

ALL LIGHTS IN THE GRAPNEL SUDDENLY WENT OUT, AND ONLY THE GLARE FROM THE DEVOURING FLAMES REVEALED THE DEATH THROES OF THE DESTROYER.



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SIR?

I - I CAN MANAGE, THANKS! PASS A MESSAGE TO THE W/T OFFICE. GIVE THE OPERATOR ON WATCH OUR POSITION! TELL HIM TO BREAK RADIO SILENCE AND REQUEST ASSISTANCE!

## The Crimson Sea

NO REPLY FROM  
THE W/T OFFICE, SIR.

IT'S YOUNG PETER  
WAYMAN ON WATCH, I  
BELIEVE—YOUR BROTHER,  
LIEUTENANT! NIP BELOW  
AND SEE WHAT'S  
HAPPENED!



AS LIEUTENANT WAYMAN CLATTERED  
AWAY, TREVOR JARDINE ADDRESSED  
THOSE OF HIS MEN WHO COULD STILL  
HEAR HIM....

THIS IS THE  
CAPTAIN! CLEAR LOWER  
DECK IMMEDIATELY!  
BREAK OUT THE CARLEY  
RAFTS AND SEE THAT  
YOUR LIFE-BELTS ARE  
INFLATED! STAND BY  
TO ABANDON  
SHIP!



DOWN BELOW, LIEUTENANT WAYMAN STAGGERED  
ALONG THE HEAVILY LISTING DECK TO THE W/T  
OFFICE....

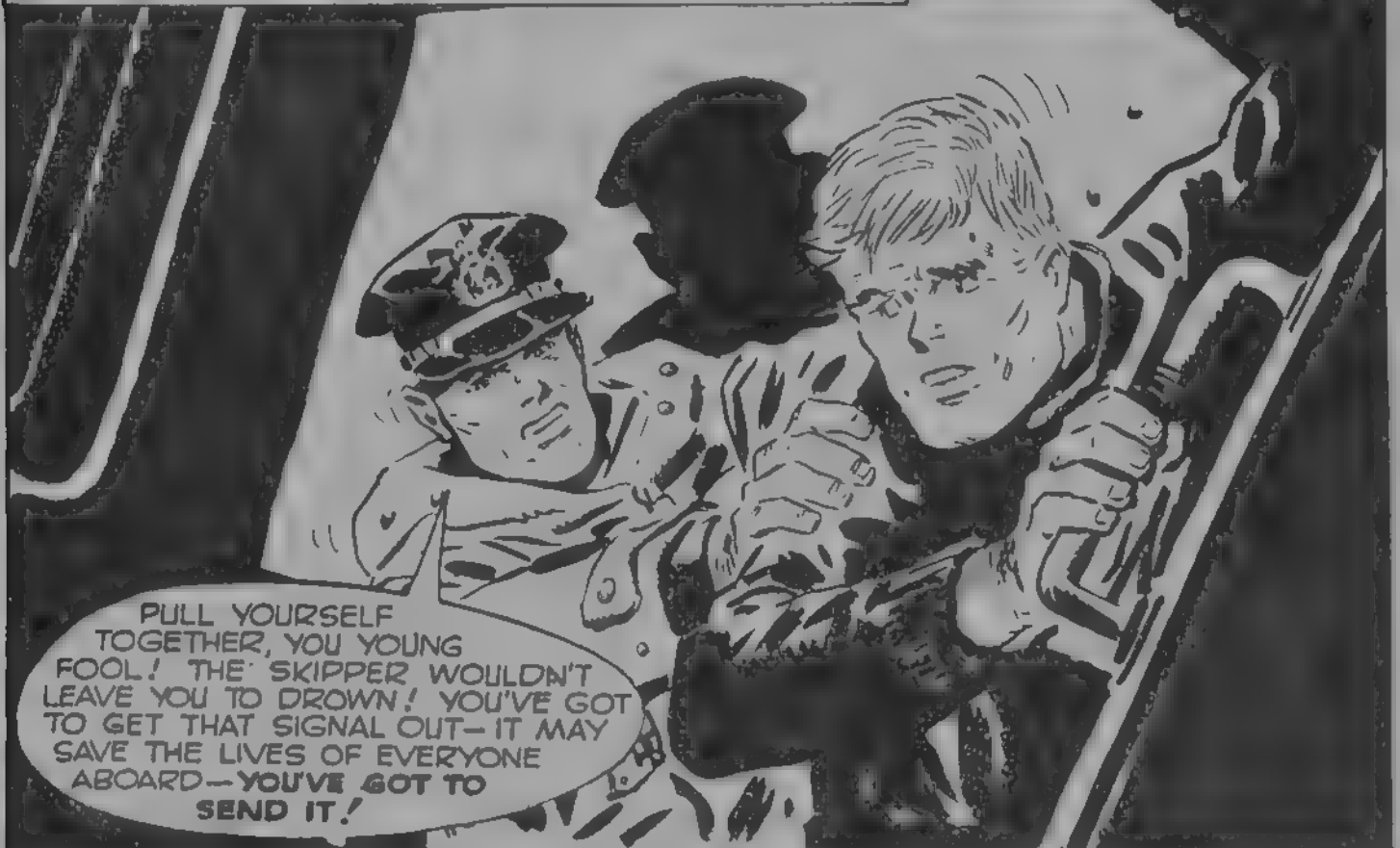
PETER!  
HAVE YOU SENT  
OUT OUR  
POSITION?



THERE—THERE'S  
NOT TIME! WE'RE SINKING!  
DON'T STAY DOWN HERE, DAVE—  
YOU'LL BE TRAPPED!



LIEUTENANT WAYMAN SCRAMBLED TO THE LADDER AND GRABBED AT HIS BROTHER AS PETER CLIMBED UPWARDS....



BUT YOUNG PETER WAYMAN, FACING HIS FIRST TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE OF ACTION AT SEA, WAS BEYOND THE REACH OF REASONING!





THE GRAPNEL LURCHED SUDDENLY AND  
LIEUTENANT WAYMAN, HIS EYES BLEAK,  
TURNED BACK TO THE W/T OFFICE ...

MY MORSE ISN'T  
ALL THAT GOOD—I ONLY  
HOPE THEY CAN READ IT  
AT THE OTHER END!

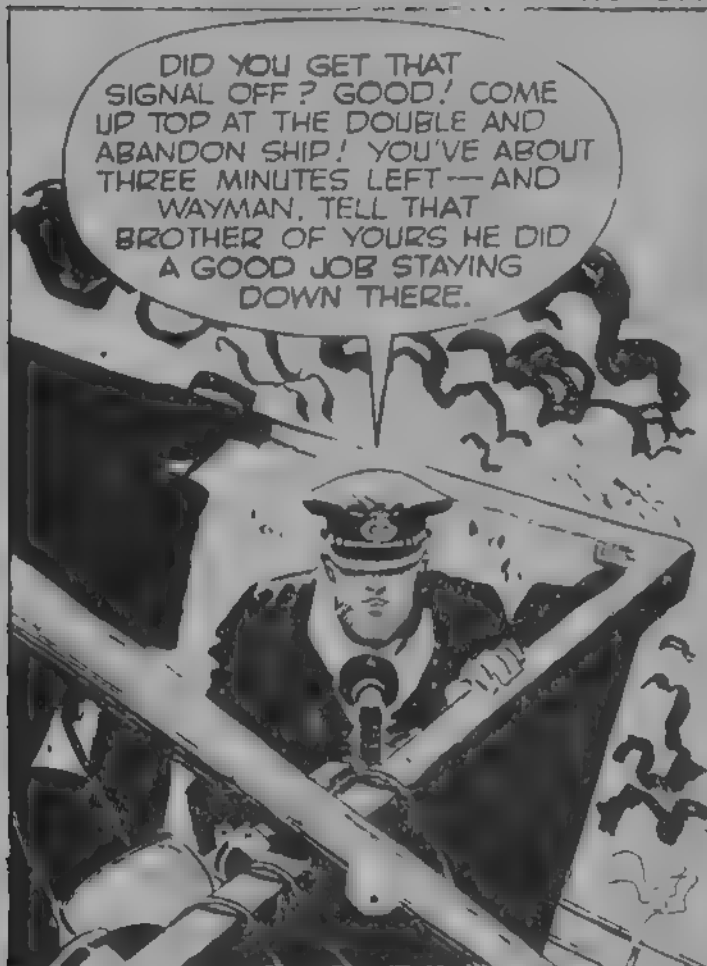


AGAIN THE DESTROYER SHUDDERED  
FROM STEM TO STERN AND HER BOWS  
SETTLED MORE DEEPLY IN THE WATER.

ABANDON SHIP!  
SWIM AWAY FROM  
GRAPNEL BUT STAY  
TOGETHER IN THE WATER—  
AND GOOD LUCK,  
ALL OF YOU!



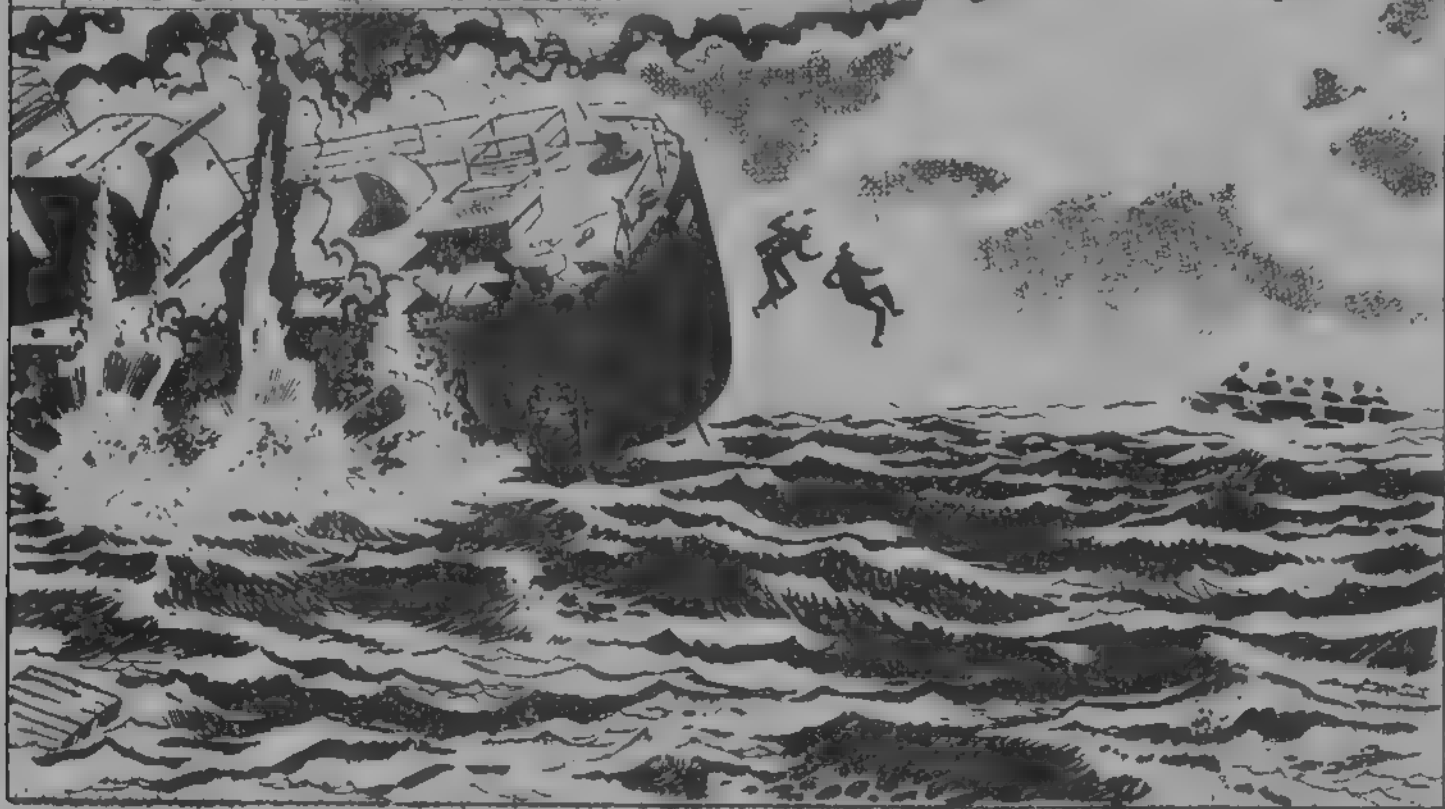
DID YOU GET THAT SIGNAL OFF? GOOD! COME UP TOP AT THE DOUBLE AND ABANDON SHIP! YOU'VE ABOUT THREE MINUTES LEFT—AND WAYMAN, TELL THAT BROTHER OF YOURS HE DID A GOOD JOB STAYING DOWN THERE.



LIEUTENANT WAYMAN GRIMACED WRYLY AS HE HEARD THE CAPTAIN'S COMPLIMENT! BUT EVERY SECOND HE LINGERED LESSENED HIS CHANCE OF ESCAPE....



BY THE TIME HE REACHED THE BLESSED OPEN AIR OF THE UPPER DECK, THE GRADNEL WAS STEADYING HERSELF FOR THE FINAL PLUNGE BENEATH THE WAVES. JARDINE HIMSELF WAS WAITING ON THE QUARTERDECK...



## The Crimson Sea

THE LIGHT FROM THE BLAZING GRAPNEL BATHED THE SWIMMING SURVIVORS IN A BLOOD-RED GLOW!



THE DESTROYER WENT DOWN IN COMPLETE SILENCE AND THOSE LEFT BEHIND STARED AT EACH OTHER WITH RED-RIMMED EYES. IN THE DARKNESS, LIEUTENANT WAYMAN HEARD HIS NAME BEING CALLED...



EVEN IN THE DARKNESS PETER'S TENSENESS COMMUNICATED ITSELF TO HIS ELDER BROTHER...





SLOWLY THE ATLANTIC CURRENTS DRIFTED THE SURVIVORS APART INTO SMALL ISLANDS OF FLOATING HUMANITY! LIEUTENANT WAYMAN AND HIS BROTHER ATTACHED THEMSELVES TO ONE SUCH GROUP...



AS PETER ANSWERED, THE CHILLED SEAMEN RAISED A CHEER — A THIN SOUND THAT DRIFTED AWAY OVER THE RISING CRESTS OF THE WAVES, AND WAS LOST IN AN INSTANT...



THE NIGHT WAS LONG! OCCASIONALLY A MAN SPOKE IN A HOARSE WHISPER AND TWICE A PIERCING SCREAM CAME OUT OF THE DARKNESS, SENDING A SHIVER THROUGH THE BODIES OF THE MEN ALREADY WRACKED WITH NUMBING COLD. AT LAST THE FIRST FLIMSY STREAMERS OF DAWN STREAKED THE HORIZON....



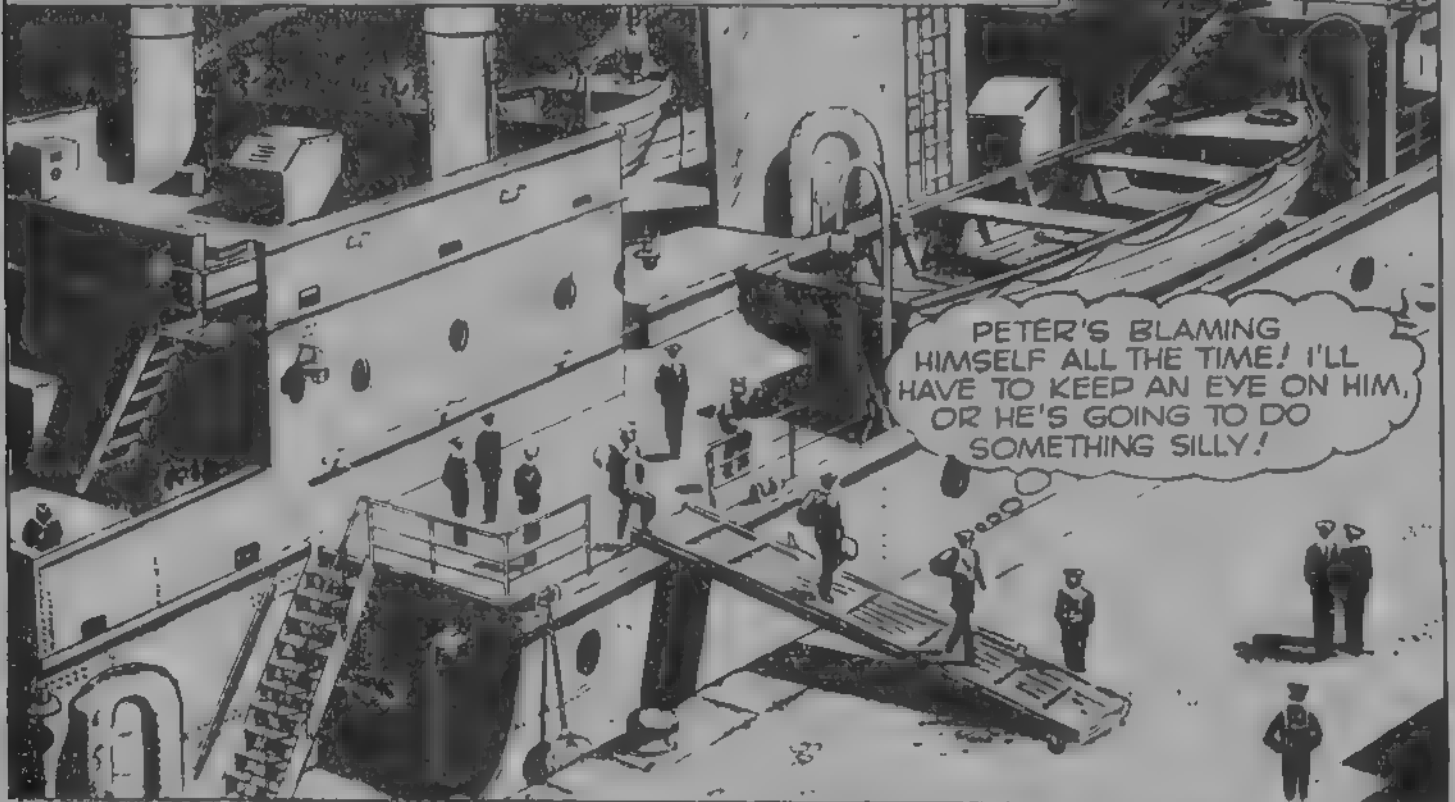
THE FRIGATE CAME UP LIKE A GREY GHOST OUT OF THE MILKY DAWN. FROM THE WATER, GRAPNEL'S SURVIVORS WATCHED THE SEABOAT BEING LOWERED AND PULLED TOWARDS THEM...



THE FRIGATE WASTED NO TIME IN THE AREA! AS SOON AS THE SURVIVORS OF THE GRAPNEL HAD BEEN TAKEN ABOARD, SHE SET COURSE FOR LONDONDERRY. BELOW DECK, WARM AND FED, LIEUTENANT WAYMAN SOUGHT OUT HIS YOUNG BROTHER...



ABRUPTLY, PETER WAYMAN PUSHED PAST HIS BROTHER AND CLIMBED THE LADDER TO THE UPPER DECK. THERE HE REMAINED BROODINGLY STARING ACROSS THE VASTNESS OF THE ATLANTIC. WHEN THE FRIGATE DOCKED AT LONDONDERRY, HE PURPOSELY AVOIDED HIS BROTHER.





## The Crimson Sea

AT THE GREY-WALLED NAVAL BARRACKS, CHATHAM, THE GRAPNEL SURVIVORS WERE RE-KITTED WITHIN A FEW HOURS AND SENT ON SEVEN DAYS' LEAVE...



DAVE WAYMAN SAID NOTHING TO HIS MOTHER, BUT HE WAS MORE CONCERNED THAN EVER ABOUT HIS BROTHER. THEN, A WEEK AFTER THEY BOTH RETURNED TO BARRACKS, DAVE HAD NEWS OF HIS NEW SHIP....



NO, HE'S NOT, SIR—  
BUT I COULD PUT HIM ON!  
I EXPECT THERE'S QUITE A  
FEW ALREADY NAMED ON  
THE CHIT WHO WOULD  
PREFER TO SPEND  
ANOTHER WEEK HERE IN  
BARRACKS INSTEAD!



TWO DAYS LATER, THE NAVAL DRAFT  
KNOWN AS "JOB NUMBER 216"  
PREPARED TO DEPART TO AN UNKNOWN  
DESTINATION! DAVE'S HINT HAD BEEN  
TAKEN — PETER WAS AMONG THEM....

HAVE YOU  
HEARD THE BUZZ,  
PETE? THEY RECKON  
WE'RE GOING TO A  
BATTLE-WAGON!



IN LONDON, THE RATINGS WERE JOINED BY  
OFFICERS OF THE SAME DRAFT....

DAVE! I  
DIDN'T KNOW  
YOU WERE ON  
THIS DRAFT!

HALLO, PETER! YES,  
SEVERAL OF THE OLD  
GRAPNEL'S CREW ARE HERE!  
I HEAR WE'RE BOUND FOR  
A SCOTTISH PORT—BUT  
KEEP THAT UNDER  
YOUR HAT.

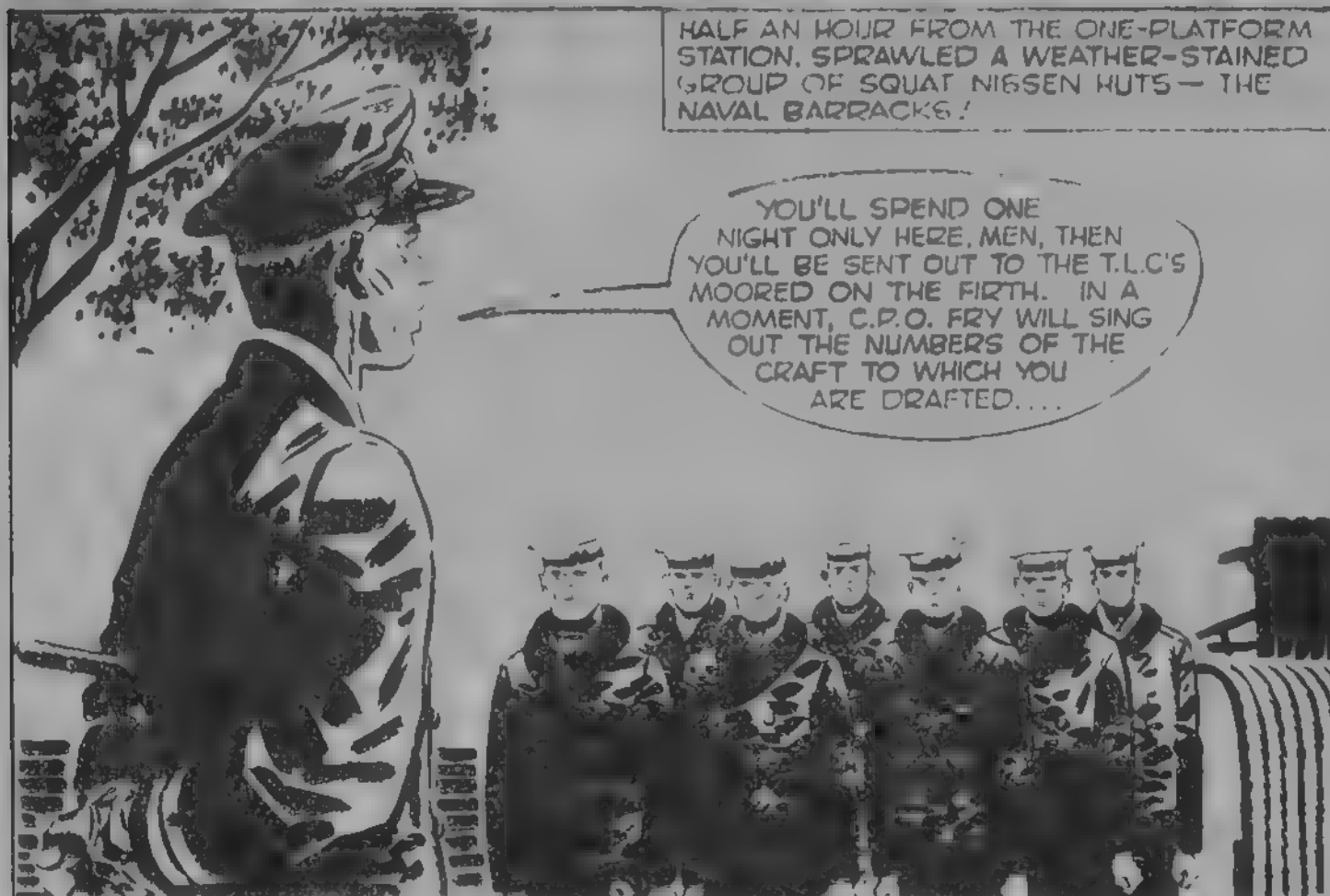


## Chapter 2. A SECOND CHANCE

IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE AFTERNOON OF THE FOLLOWING DAY THAT THEY ARRIVED AT THEIR DESTINATION.... A SMALL PORT IN THE NORTH OF SCOTLAND.



HALF AN HOUR FROM THE ONE-PLATFORM STATION, SPRAWLED A WEATHER-STAINED GROUP OF SQUAT NISSEN HUTS—THE NAVAL BARRACKS!





PETER HEARD HIS NAME CALLED, FOLLOWED BY CRAFT NUMBER 457 AND EARLY THE FOLLOWING MORNING, HE WAS TAKEN OUT TO THE LONG LINE OF MOORED TANK LANDING CRAFT.



BLOW YOUR  
LUCK, MATE, IF YOU'RE  
JOINING THIS FLOTILLA!  
THESE TUBS ARE SO  
SMALL YOU CAN'T EVEN  
STAND UPRIGHT ON  
THE MESSDECK!

THANKS  
FOR THE  
WELCOME!

THE PESSIMISTIC RATING HELPED HIM ABOARD AND PETER TOSSED HIS HAMMOCK AND KITBAG THROUGH THE SQUARE HATCH ON THE QUARTERDECK AND FOLLOWED IT DOWN INTO THE CREW'S MESS....

WHO'S THE COX'N?  
I'M TELEGRAPHIST  
WAYMAN, JUST COME  
ABOARD TO JOIN.

I'M 'OPKINS. I'M THE  
COX'N. STOW YOUR KIT BAG  
AND 'AMMOCK WHERE YOU CAN  
FIND A SPACE AND THEN REPORT  
TO THE SKIPPER IN THE  
WARDROOM.



THE WARDROOM WAS ALMOST IMMEDIATELY ABOVE THE SEAMEN'S MESS-DECK AND WHEN PETER KNOCKED AND ENTERED — HE RECEIVED A SHOCK...



THIS IS LIEUTENANT SHARPE. HE IS RETURNING FOR GENERAL SERVICE DUTY AND I AM TAKING COMMAND OF T.L.C FOUR-FIVE-SEVEN. THERE IS A TR-FOUR SET AND A PORTABLE FORTY-SIX SET ABOARD. CAN YOU HANDLE THEM?



DAVE WAYMAN DISMISSED HIS BROTHER AND LIEUTENANT SHARPE LOOKED UP WITH A COCKED EYEBROW....



NOW THAT THE LANDING CRAFT FLOTILLA HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP TO FULL CREW STRENGTH, A PROGRAMME OF HARD TRAINING COMMENCED.

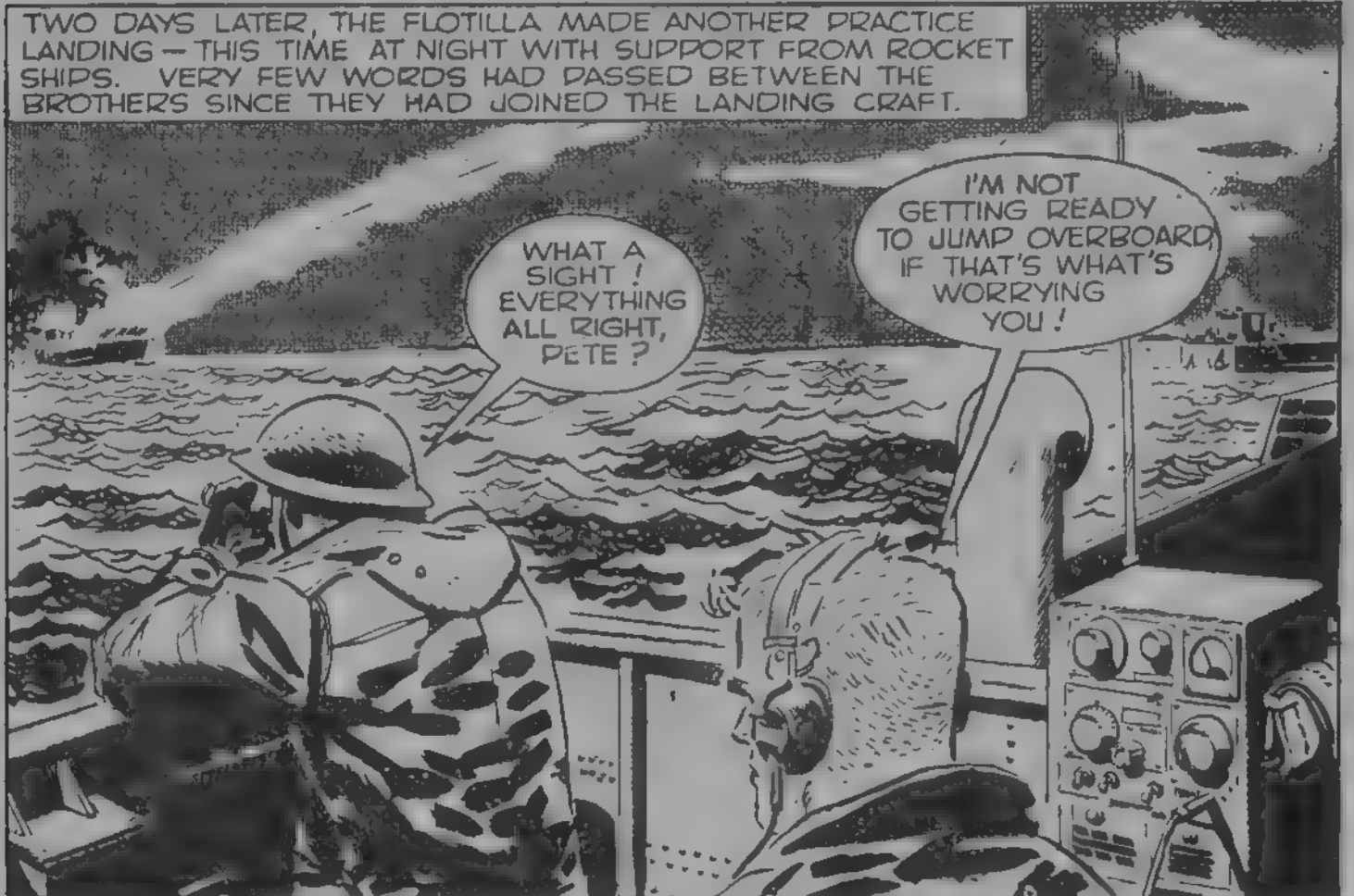
GET THAT RAMP UP AS SOON AS THE LAST TANK'S OFF-AND SLAP IT ABOUT! ONE DAY YOUR LIVES MAY DEPEND ON HOW FAST YOU CAN DO THE JOB!



TWO DAYS LATER, THE FLOTILLA MADE ANOTHER PRACTICE LANDING - THIS TIME AT NIGHT WITH SUPPORT FROM ROCKET SHIPS. VERY FEW WORDS HAD PASSED BETWEEN THE BROTHERS SINCE THEY HAD JOINED THE LANDING CRAFT.

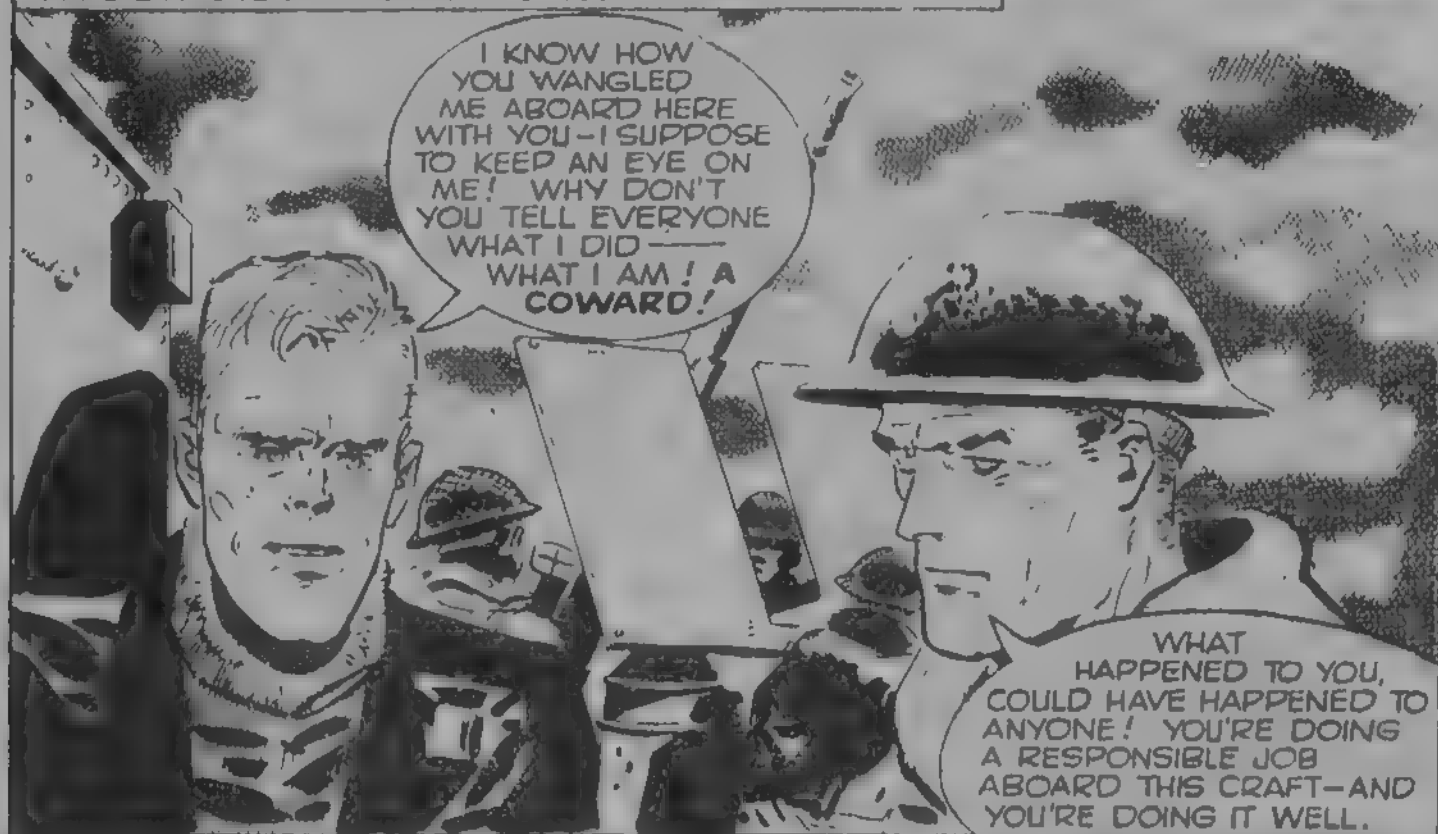
WHAT A SIGHT! EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, PETE?

I'M NOT GETTING READY TO JUMP OVERBOARD IF THAT'S WHAT'S WORRYING YOU!





DAVE'S LIPS TIGHTENED WITH THE EFFORT HE MADE TO CONTROL HIMSELF. HE KNEW THE MEMORY OF THE GRAPNEL'S LAST HOURS STILL CAST A HAUNTING SHADOW OVER PETER'S LIFE....



DURING THE FORENOON WATCH, THE BLUNT-NOSED CRAFT BUFFETED THEIR WAY BACK TO HARBOUR AND THE OFFICERS WERE CALLED TO A BRIEFING AT FLOTILLA H.Q. ASHORE....



THAT EVENING, ABOARD THE CRAFT.

ANY MORE LETTERS  
TO GO ASHORE, BOYS?  
THIS IS YOUR LAST  
CHANCE TO WRITE  
YOUR WILLS!



TURN IT UP,  
COX'N. I BET WE'RE  
JUST GOING ON  
ANOTHER DUMMY RUN!

AT FIRST LIGHT, THE CRAFT MOVED ON TO  
THE BEACH AND A PROCESSION OF TANKS,  
BREN-GUN CARRIERS AND TOUGH-FACED  
COMMANDOS WENT ABOARD. THEN  
THE FLOTILLA HEADED FOR THE OPEN  
SEA....

THIS IS THE CAPTAIN SPEAKING! NO  
DUMMY RUN TODAY-THIS IS THE  
REAL THING! BY DAWN WE'LL BE  
OFF NORWAY AND WE'RE GOING  
TO LAND TANKS AND COMMANDOS  
IN THE PORT OF TRUROCK!  
ROCKET SHIPS AND A CRUISER,  
H.M.S. CLIVEN, WILL GIVE US  
COVERING FIRE.



THE HOURS PASSED SLOWLY UNTIL DAWN'S PALE  
LIGHT LIT THE HORIZON. TENSELY, THE CREW  
CLOSED UP TO ACTION STATIONS. THE ENEMY  
COAST WAS AHEAD.

THERE'S  
TRUROCK, MAJOR!  
H-HOUR IN FIFTY-  
EIGHT MINUTES!  
WE'RE BANG  
ON TIME!



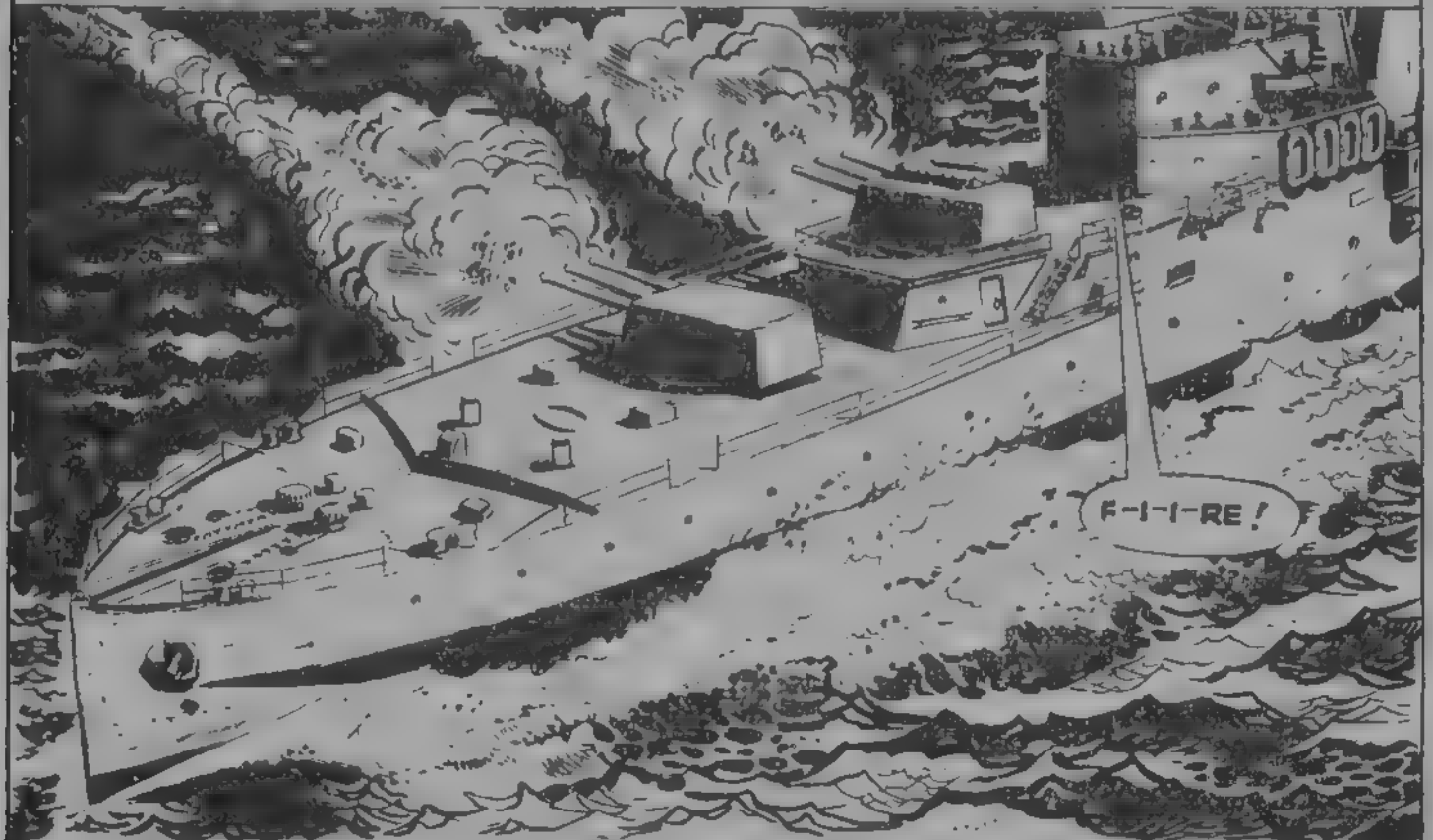
IT SEEMS QUIET  
ENOUGH! LET'S HOPE  
WE'RE GOING TO CATCH  
JERRY NAPPING!

## The Crimson Sea

UNOPPOSED, THE INVASION FORCE CLOSED IN ON THEIR OBJECTIVE. IN THE COLD, SHARP DAWN LIGHT, THE PORT INSTALLATIONS AND BUILDINGS OF THE TOWN STOOD OUT WITH RAZOR-EDGED CLEARNESS.



IN COMPLETE AND UNNATURAL SILENCE, THE LANDING CRAFT CREPT TOWARDS THE SHELVING BEACH. TWENTY YARDS — FIFTEEN — TEN... THEN OUT AT SEA THE PROTECTING GUNS OF THE CLIVEDEN SUDDENLY OPENED A TREMENDOUS BARRAGE...





AND AS THE CLIVEDEN WAS STILL ILLUMINATED BY THE BRILLIANCE OF HER OWN GUN FLASHES — THE WAITING NAZIS UNLEASHED THEIR REPLY...



IN THE HARBOUR, THE LANDING CRAFT HIT THE BEACH! THE RAMP DOORS CRASHED ON TO THE SHINGLE AND THE COMMANDOS AND THEIR VEHICLES WERE ON ENEMY TERRITORY.



## The Crimson Sea

A CRESCENDO OF SOUND FILLED THE AIR! ROARING WATER SPOUTS ROSE ON ALL SIDES OF THE LANDING CRAFT AS GERMAN ARTILLERY SEARCHED FOR THE RANGE

FULL ASTERN  
BOTH! KEEP THE  
WHEEL AMIDSHIPS,  
COX'N.



TLC. 457 SLID ASTERN, SLOWLY GATHERING SPEED, LEAVING BEHIND THE INFERNO ON THE BEACH-HEAD. BUT AS THE UNWIELDY CRAFT TURNED, SHE PRESENTED A BROADSIDE TARGET....

AAAARGH!



PETER SWUNG ROUND FROM HIS RADIO SET AS A PIECE OF SHRAPNEL CRASHED INTO THE WHEELHOUSE. HE GAZED WITH HORRIFIED EYES AT THE COX'N...

HE - HE'S BEEN HIT!



PETER SPRANG FORWARD EVEN THOUGH HE WAS TREMBLING VIOLENTLY AND WHEN HE SPOKE INTO THE VOICE-PIPE TO THE BRIDGE, HIS VOICE WAS A HARSH CROAK...

HOPKINS IS DEAD, SIR! WAYMAN AT THE WHEEL.



EVEN AS PETER SPOKE, ANOTHER SHELL SMASHED INTO THE HULL OF THE CRAFT.

STAY AT THE WHEEL, PETER! SET THE TELEGRAPH FOR BOTH ENGINES FULL AHEAD -- WE'LL TRY TO GET BACK TO THE CRUISER!





## The Crimson Sea

THE ASSAULT FORCE, HAVING LANDED ALL THE COMMANDOS AND VEHICLES, WITHDREW FROM THE HARBOUR, BUT FOUR CRAFT WERE LEFT LYING ON THE BEACH. BADLY MAULED, TLC.457 WAS SINKING AS SHE WALLOWED BACK TOWARDS THE CLIVEDEN...



LESS THAN ONE HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE CRUISER TLC.457 LOST FORWARD MOVEMENT ALTOGETHER AS HER ENGINE ROOM FLOODED.



FLOUNDERING THROUGH THE ICY WATERS, THE SURVIVORS OF TLC. 457 REACHED THE SIDE OF THE CRUISER.



LIEUTENANT DAVE WAYMAN WENT UP TO HIS YOUNG BROTHER...



IN THE WARDROOM OF THE CRUISER, THE PROGRESS OF THE OPERATION WAS BEING DISCUSSED...

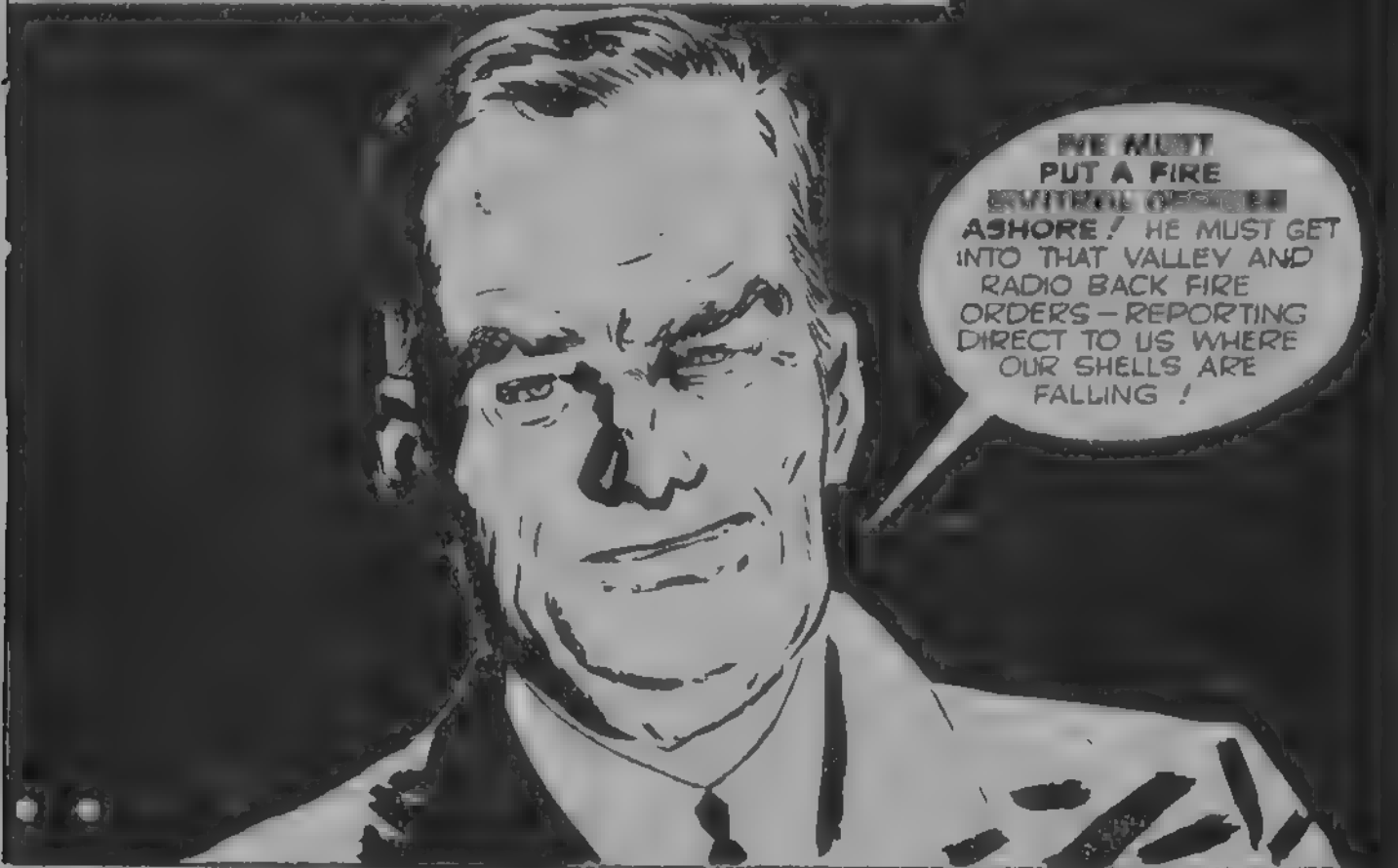
THE COMMANDOS HAVE OCCUPIED THE TOWN BUT THEY'RE PINNED DOWN BY GERMAN PILL-BOXES AND MACHINE-GUN POSITIONS THAT SURROUND THE TOWN - AND SO FAR WE'VE NOT BEEN ABLE TO HIT THE

REFINERY?





ADMIRAL FARNSHAW, IN CHARGE OF THE LAND AND SEA FORCES ENGAGED, STARED AT THE MODEL FOR A LONG TIME. WHEN HE LOOKED UP HIS JAW WAS SET AND HIS LIPS WERE A THIN, DETERMINED LINE.....



THE CRUISER'S SIGNAL OFFICER PUT FORWARD A SUGGESTION...

WE'VE JUST TAKEN ABOARD AN OFFICER FROM ONE OF THE LANDING CRAFT, SIR — HE WAS BRIEFED ON THE LAY-OUT OF THE TOWN AND THE REFINERY WITH THE COMMANDO FORCE.

EXCELLENT! HE'S THE MAN WE'LL SEND ASHORE. FIND A VOLUNTEER RADIO OPERATOR TO GO WITH HIM AND IMPRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MISSION UPON THEM BOTH!

THE TWO BROTHERS WERE CHANGING INTO KHAKI BATTLEDRESS WHEN THE SIGNAL OFFICER EXPLAINED TO LT. WAYMAN WHAT WAS REQUIRED.

I'LL HAVE A SHOT AT IT, SIR!

I'LL GO DOWN TO THE W/T OFFICE. ONE OF THE LADS THERE WILL VOLUNTEER TO GO WITH YOU.



THE SIGNAL OFFICER WAS PASSING THROUGH THE MESS-DECK DOOR BEFORE PETER SPOKE. HIS FACE WAS PALE BUT HIS VOICE WAS STEADY...

I'LL GO ASHORE WITH LIEUTENANT WAYMAN, SIR! I CAN OPERATE A FORTY-SIX SET AND THAT'S THE TYPE YOU'LL NEED FOR THIS JOB.



THE SIGNAL OFFICER STARED KEENLY AT PETER AND LOOKED AT DAVE WITH A GRIN.

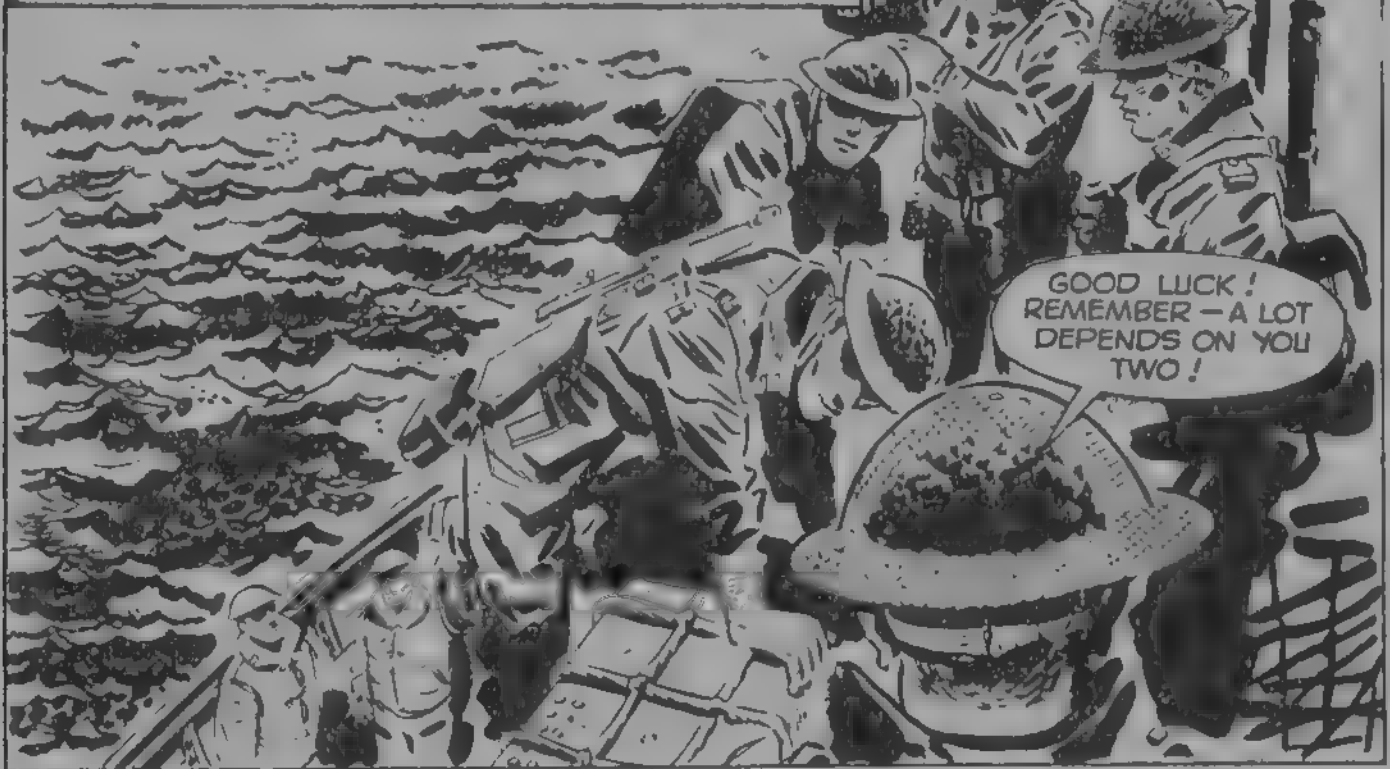
WHAT DO YOU SAY, LIEUTENANT? WOULD YOU LIKE THIS MAN AS YOUR OPERATOR?

HE WILL DO FINE, SIR!



## Chapter 3. MISSION ASHORE

LIEUTENANT WAYMAN AND PETER WERE GIVEN A SHORT BRIEFING ON THEIR MISSION AND SUPPLIED WITH GRENADES, A THOMPSON SUB-MACHINE GUN — AND THE VITAL RADIO SET...



AS THE PINNACE HEADED TOWARDS THE SMOKE ENGULFED JETTY, WELL-DIRECTED MORTAR FIRE CAME DANGEROUSLY CLOSE AND DAVE SENSED THE KEYED-UP NERVES OF HIS YOUNGER BROTHER. BUT THERE WAS NO TIME FOR TALK...



ON THE JETTY THE CLATTERING STACCATO CLAMOUR OF GUNFIRE PLAYED A GRIM OVERTURE TO THEIR HAZARDOUS MISSION...



WHEN THEY REACHED THE TOWN ITSELF, THEY WERE APPALLED BY THE DESTRUCTION WROUGHT BY THE DESPERATE FIGHTING THAT WAS STILL GOING ON....



THE COMMAND H.Q. WAS NO MORE THAN A SMOKE-BLACKENED GUTTED SHELL OF WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN A BAKER'S SHOP.



THE PINE-COVERED FOOTHILLS OF THE MOUNTAINS CAME RIGHT TO THE EDGE OF THE TOWN ON THE NORTHERN SIDE. ONCE LIEUTENANT WAYMAN AND PETER BROKE CLEAR OF THE SHATTERED BUILDINGS, THEY BEGAN A LUNG-BURSTING CLIMB THROUGH THE TREES...





## The Crimson Sea

AS PETER EASED HIS SHOULDERS OUT OF THE RADIO SET HARNESS—A BOULDER CAME CLATTERING DOWN THE SLOPES ABOVE THEM...



LIEUTENANT WAYMAN WHIRLED AROUND, THE MUZZLE OF HIS SUB-MACHINE GUN SWINGING UP AND SPOUTING A STREAM OF FLAME....

THE IMPACT OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED HIT PETER LIKE A HAMMER BLOW! HIS FACE WAS CHALKY-WHITE AS HE AND HIS BROTHER SKIRTED THE FALLEN GERMANS....



THREE TIMES THEY WERE FORCED TO DROP ON THEIR FACES AND CRAWL SLOWLY THROUGH THE TANGLED UNDERGROWTH TO AVOID GERMAN PATROLS. THEN, AT LAST...

THERE IT IS!  
THERE'S THE  
REFINERY,  
PETER!

ALL WE HAVE TO DO  
IS GET DOWN THERE —  
THROUGH JERRY'S MAIN  
LINE! THAT WON'T  
BE EASY!



THEY CLAMBERED DOWN THE STEEP SIDE OF THE VALLEY AND THEIR CAUTION GREW AS THEY APPROACHED THE MAIN GERMAN DEFENSIVE POSITIONS, WHERE MACHINE-GUN EMBLACEMENTS WERE SET UP EVERY TWENTY OR THIRTY YARDS...

IF THEY  
LOOK ROUND,  
WE'VE HAD  
IT!



AND THEN, SUDDENLY, THEY WERE PAST THE GERMAN POSITIONS AND IN CLEAR VIEW OF THE REFINERY



HAVING SET UP THE RADIO IN THE SHELTER OF THE ROCK FACE PETER WHISPERED HIS CALL-SIGN INTO THE MICROPHONE.



ABOARD THE CRUISER THE TENSE GROUP OF OFFICERS IN THE W/T OFFICE SIGHED WITH RELIEF AS PETER'S VOICE CAME OVER THE LOUD-SPEAKER....



QUIETLY, PETER RELAYED TO HIS BROTHER THE PREPARATIONS TAKING PLACE ABOARD THE CRUISER. THEN THE FIRST SHELL WHINED OVERHEAD...



DAVE WAYMAN SPREAD OUT THE LARGE-SCALE MAP OF THE AREA WHICH HAD BEEN SPECIALLY RULED OFF IN SQUARES-- FIFTY YARDS TO EACH SQUARE..





## The Crimson Sea

IN A VOICE WHICH HE CAREFULLY CONTROLLED, PETER RADIOED BACK THE FIRE ORDERS TO THE *CLIVEDEN*. SECONDS PASSED AND THEN ANOTHER SHELL WHISTLED OVERHEAD TO LAND WITH A SICKENING CRASH THAT SHOOK THE HILLSIDE...



THE THIRD RANGING SHELL HIT THE EXTREME CORNER OF THE REFINERY BOUNDARY...



PETER REPEATED HIS BROTHER'S INSTRUCTIONS AND THEN THEY BOTH WAITED WHILE THE SECONDS TICKED AWAY. ABOARD THE *CLIVEDEN*, ADMIRAL FARNSHAW WAS ON THE BRIDGE...



ON THE HILLSIDE, PETER AND LIEUTENANT DAVE WAYMAN FLUNG THEMSELVES DOWN, SCRABBLING DESPERATELY FOR COVER AS THE SCREAMING SALVOS FROM THE *CLIVEDEN* FILLED THE AIR WITH THE SOUND OF IMMINENT DESTRUCTION. THE EARTH ITSELF SEEMED TO BE ERUPTING....



EXPLOSION FOLLOWED EXPLOSION IN A DEAFENING CHAIN-REACTION THAT SEEMED TO HAVE NO END! A GIANT FIRE-BALL SEARED OUTWARDS, BURNING EVERY BUSH AND BLADE OF GRASS IN ITS PATH...



ALL EFFORT AT CONCEALMENT ABANDONED, THEY SCRAMBLED AWAY FROM THE LUNG-SCORCHING HEAT OF THE BLAZING REFINERY....



THE GERMANS WERE SHOCKED AND ENRAGED BY THE DESTRUCTION OF THE REFINERY. THEY WERE OUT FOR SWIFT REVENGE....



AS HIS BROTHER FELL, PETER TUGGED ONE OF THE HAND GRENADES FROM HIS BELT AND PULLED THE PIN. HIS ACTIONS NOW WERE AUTOMATIC, SELF-PRESERVATION WAS HIS ONLY CONSCIOUS THOUGHT. DELIBERATELY HE LOBBED THE GRENADE TOWARDS THE BUNCHED GERMANS.



WHITE-HOT FRAGMENTS FROM THE GRENADE HISSED ABOUT PETER'S EARS AS HE SNATCHED UP THE SNUB-NOSED MACHINE-GUN AGAIN....





## The Crimson Sea

THE SHUDDERING JAR OF THE THOMPSON'S RECOIL NUMBED PETER'S HANDS AS HE FIRED OFF THE FULL MAGAZINE IN ONE LONG DEVASTATING BURST—AND THEN WHEN HE STOPPED, THE VALLEY SEEMED STRANGELY QUIET....



PETER STARED AROUND HIM DAZEDLY THEN HE HEARD A LOW MOAN AND HE SLID DOWN THE SLOPE TO HIS BROTHER...



ANOTHER WHISPER OF PAIN PASSED LIEUTENANT WAYMAN'S LIPS AND HIS FINGERS LOST THEIR GRIP ON PETER'S ARM AS HE FELL BACK UNCONSCIOUS....



THE TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION AT THE REFINERY HAD THROWN THE GERMAN INFANTRY COMMANDER INTO A STATE OF CONFUSION. GREAT GAPS APPEARED IN THE NAZI'S DEFENSIVE LINE AS TROOPS WERE ORDERED BACK TO DEAL WITH THE RAGING FIRES THAT HAD STARTED — AND THROUGH THESE GAPS, PETER MADE HIS WAY UNCHALLENGED...



FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, PETER COLLAPSED WITH HIS UNCONSCIOUS BURDEN INTO THE ARMS OF A BRITISH COMMANDO PATROL...



## The Crimson Sea

STEP BY STEP, SHELTERING BEHIND A WITHERING MACHINE-GUN FIRE, THE COMMANDOS WITHDREW TO THE BEACH—AND PETER AND LIEUTENANT WAYMAN WENT WITH THEM...

I AIN'T SORRY  
TO LEAVE! IT'S NOT THE  
SORT OF HOLIDAY RESORT I MUCH  
CARE FOR—GIMME BLACKPOOL  
ANY DAY!



NEWS OF THE OIL REFINERY'S DESTRUCTION WAS FLASHED ACROSS THE LENGTH OF NORWAY—AND ON INTO GERMANY ITSELF. THE GERMAN NAVAL HIGH COMMAND RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY...

THE BRITISH RAIDING FORCES  
MUST BE LIQUIDATED! NOT  
ONE MAN OR SHIP MUST  
RETURN TO ENGLAND!  
CAPTAIN DORNHEIM, YOU WILL  
ORDER THE PRINZ WILHELM  
TO PUT TO SEA IMMEDIATELY!  
**THIS IS AN ORDER FROM  
THE FUHRER!**

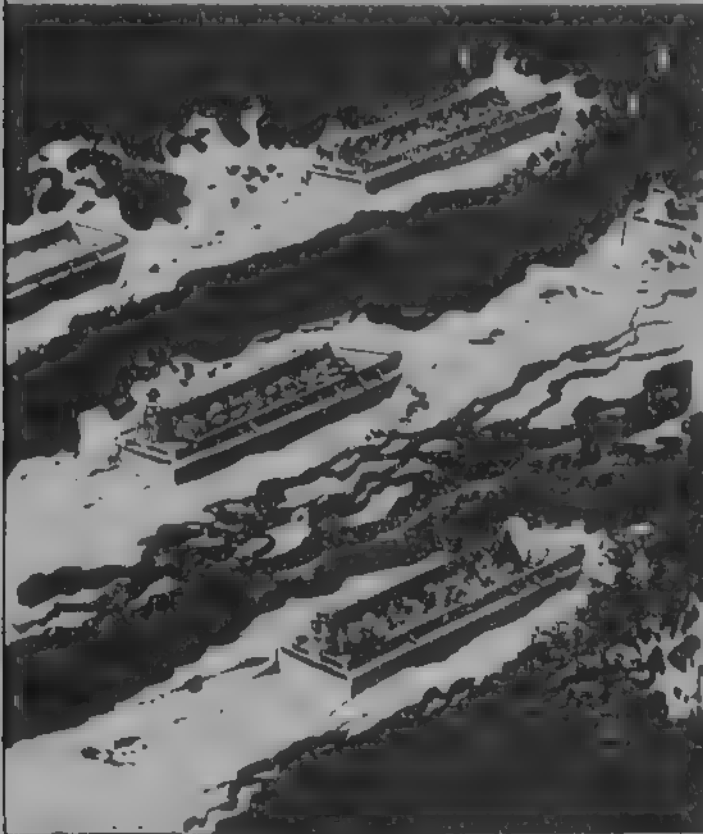


## Chapter 4. LAST SIGNAL

THE PRINZ WILHELM, A POCKET-BATTLESHIP AND THE PRIDE OF THE GERMAN NAVY, HAD FOR MONTHS BEEN SKULKING IN TRONDHEIM FIORD, A CONSTANT MENACE TO BRITISH CONVOYS TO RUSSIA. EQUIPPED WITH EIGHT-INCH GUNS AND A SPEED OF 32 KNOTS, SHE WAS A DEADLY FOE....



MEANWHILE, THE BRITISH TASK FORCE SLOWLY SWUNG TOWARDS THE WEST AND HEADED FOR ENGLAND—A SADLY BATTERED BUT TRIUMPHANT COMPANY...



AN HOUR PASSED—TWO HOURS! THE COAST OF NORWAY SANK BELOW THE HORIZON...





ALL EYES ON THE CLIVEDEN'S BRIDGE SWUNG TO THE PORT QUARTER! WHEN ADMIRAL FARNSHAW BROKE THE SILENCE HIS VOICE WAS CRISP AND DECISIVE...



AS THE BRITISH CRUISER CLEARED DECKS FOR ACTION, AN AIR OF GRIM DETERMINATION PERVADED THE WHOLE SHIP.

MAKE A SIGNAL TO THE HOME FLEET, REPEATED TO ADMIRALTY, CAPTAIN! WE'VE BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME TO GET THE PRINZ WILHELM OUT AT SEA. NOW WE'VE GOT HER OUT—WE **MUST DESTROY HER!**



THE CLIVEDEN'S DECKS THROBBED TO THE INCREASED ENGINE REVOLUTIONS AS SHE MOUNTED TOP SPEED AND ALTERED COURSE,...

SHE'S HIDING US FROM JERRY TO GIVE US A CHANCE TO GET AWAY! BROTHER, THIS IS IT — THE NAVY'S GOING INTO ACTION!



WITHIN FOUR MINUTES, THE CLIVEDEN HAD SPREAD A THICK WHITE STREAMER OF SMOKE BETWEEN THE PRINZ WILHELM AND THE SLOW-MOVING CONVOY. NOW SHE TURNED TO MEET THE GERMAN COLOSSUS.

GENTLEMEN, OUR TASK TODAY IS TO HOLD THE PRINZ WILHELM HERE AT SEA UNTIL THE HOME FLEET ARRIVES! UPON US MAY DEPEND THE COURSE OF THE ENTIRE WAR AT SEA! THE ENEMY IS AHEAD — AND OUR DUTY IS CLEAR! GOOD LUCK TO YOU ALL!



THE CLIVEDEN'S BOWS BIT INTO THE OILY SWELL OF THE NORTH SEA, SHEERING THROUGH THE WATER AND CLOSING THE RANGE WITH EVERY SECOND. IN THE GUN TURRETS THE GUN CREWS WAITED...



AGAIN AND AGAIN THE 8-INCH GUNS OF THE GERMAN POCKET-BATTLESHIP FLASHED FIRE! SHELL-BURSTS ENVELOPED THE CLIVEDEN IN A CURTAIN OF WATER-- AND STILL SHE WAS UNABLE TO HIT BACK....



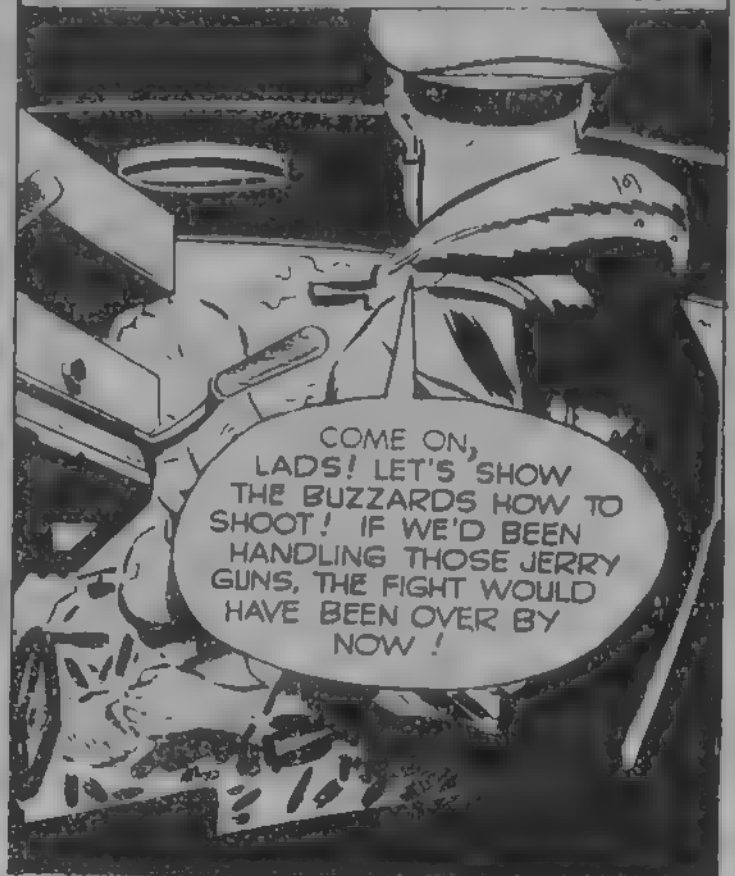
THE SURVIVORS FROM THE ASSAULT FORCES WHO HAD BEEN TAKEN ABOARD THE *CLIVEDEN* WERE LED BELOW DECKS. LT. WAYMAN WAS TAKEN TO THE WARDROOM WHICH HAD BEEN TURNED INTO A TEMPORARY SICK-BAY AND PETER WAS ACCOMMODATED ON THE CRUISER'S W/T MESS-DECK...



THE CRAWLING FEAR THAT PETER HAD FELT INSIDE HIM WHEN HE HAD BEEN BELOW DECKS DURING THE *GRAPNEL*'S LAST MOMENTS HAD CLAMPED ITS COLD HAND ON HIM. AS HE CLIMBED INTO THE OPEN, *PRINZ WILHELM* REGISTERED HER FIRST HIT ON THE *CLIVEDEN*....



THE BRITISH CRUISER STAGGERED UNDER THE TERRIFIC IMPACT OF THE EIGHT INCH SHELL EXPLODING INSIDE HER HULL. BUT NOW SHE WAS WITHIN RANGE, HER SIX-INCH GUNS BEGAN TO HIT BACK...



THE DISASTER THAT HAD ANNIHILATED THE W/T MESS AND THE *CLIVEDEN*'S COMMUNICATION RATINGS, SHOCKED PETER OUT OF HIS PANIC. INSTEAD OF RACING ON TO THE EXPOSED UPPER DECK HE MADE HIS WAY TOWARDS THE WARDROOM WHERE HIS BROTHER LAY. . . .



DAVE — IT WAS AWFUL! I'D JUST LEFT THE W/T MESS WHEN THE SHELL CAME INBOARD! THE MESS WAS WIPE OUT! EVERYTHING. . . !

WE'RE IN A TOUGH SPOT, PETER, BUT WE'LL COME THROUGH!

THE *CLIVEDEN* WAS FIGHTING BACK WITH EVERYTHING SHE HAD. THE FORWARD TURRET OF THE *PRINZ WILHELM* WAS SILENCED BUT STILL A CONCENTRATED BARRAGE OF STEEL CRASHED INTO THE GALLANT CRUISER.



MAKE SURE OUR POSITION IS GOING OUT OVER THE RADIO, CAPTAIN! THE HOME FLEET MUST FIND THE *PRINZ WILHELM*!

BUT THERE WAS NO ONE ALIVE IN THE RADIO ROOM. . .



BRIDGE TO W/T OFFICE! BRIDGE TO W/T OFFICE! CAN YOU HEAR ME? WHAT'S HAPPENING DOWN THERE?



THE CLIVEDEN WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A FLOATING HULK OF BROKEN AND TWISTED METAL. ONLY ONE SIX-INCH GUN REMAINED IN ACTION, ADDING A DEFIANT NOTE TO THE CHATTERING ROAR OF THE POM-POMS AND OERLIKONS. . . .

THERE'S NO REPLY FROM THE W/T OFFICE, SIR! THE VOICE-PIPE MAY BE OUT OF ACTION! I'LL SEND A—



THE CAPTAIN'S LAST WORDS WERE LOST IN A SCREAMING CATAclysm OF SOUND AS GERMAN SHELLS RIPPED OPEN THE BOWS OF THE CLIVEDEN AND PARTIALLY DEMOLISHED THE BRIDGE. . . .

JENNINGS! JENNINGS—THE CAPTAIN—IS—IS DEAD! MAKE SURE OUR POSITION IS BEING RADIOED! AB—ABSOLUTELY V—VITAL..



## The Crimson Sea

IT TOOK LIEUTENANT JENNINGS NO MORE THAN FORTY SECONDS TO DISCOVER THE UNMANNED AND SHATTERED W/T OFFICE. HE ALREADY KNEW OF THE DISASTER TO THE W/T RATINGS MESS-DECK.

LISTEN!  
THIS IS URGENT!  
IS THERE A  
RADIO OPERATOR  
HERE—I NEED A  
MAN IMMEDIATELY!



DAVE FELT HIS BROTHER'S HAND TREMBLE AS PETER PUSHED HIMSELF TO HIS FEET...

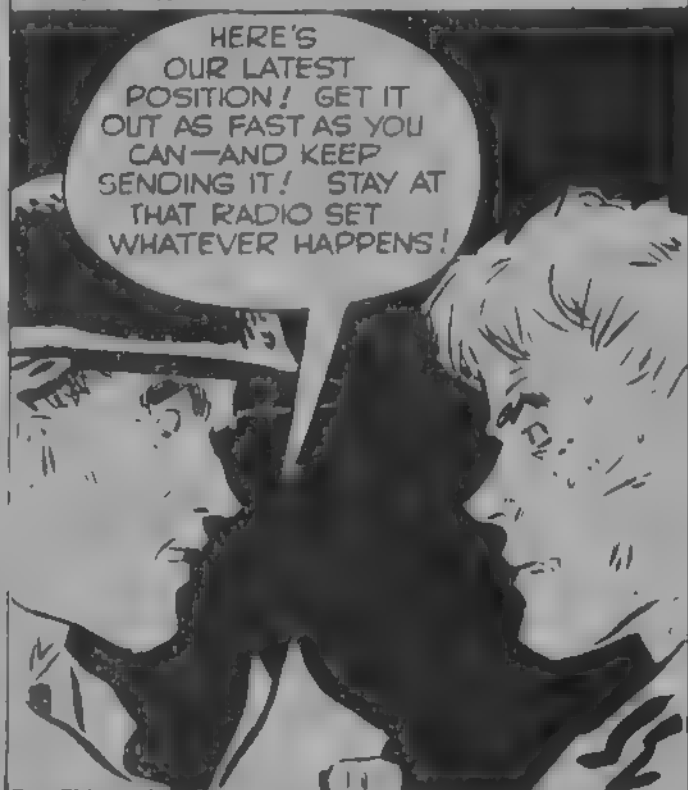
I'M A  
RADIO OP,  
SIR!

THANK  
HEAVENS! QUICK,  
FOLLOW ME.—WE MAY  
NOT HAVE MUCH  
TIME LEFT!



LESS THAN HALF A MILE AWAY, THE GAUNT OUTLINE OF THE *PRINCE WILHELM* WAS WREATHED IN GUN FLASHES AS SHE POURED SHELL AFTER SHELL INTO THE DEFENCELESS CRUISER.

HERE'S  
OUR LATEST  
POSITION! GET IT  
OUT AS FAST AS YOU  
CAN—AND KEEP  
SENDING IT! STAY AT  
THAT RADIO SET  
WHATEVER HAPPENS!



JENNINGS PUSHED PETER THROUGH THE DOOR THAT LED DOWN TO THE W/T OFFICE — AND PANIC BUBBLED UP INSIDE PETER. THIS WAS THE GRAPNEL ALL OVER AGAIN! DOWN THERE, IN THE DEPTHS OF THE SINKING SHIP WAS A BLACK TRAP OF DEATH...



A VIOLENT SHUDDER SHOOK THE CLIVEDEN FROM STEM TO STERN — AND SENT PETER SPRAWLING TO THE FOOT OF THE IRON LADDER....



## The Crimson Sea

ABOARD THE *PRINZ WILHELM*, THE GERMAN CAPTAIN STARED BLEAKLY AT THE HELPLESS *CLIVEDEN*. THERE WAS NO MERCY IN HIS VOICE AS HE RAPPED OUT THE ORDER THAT WOULD SEND THE BRITISH CRUISER TO THE BOTTOM.

BRING ALL  
GUNS TO BEAR!  
FINISH HER OFF!



BY THAT TIME, PETER WAYMAN HAD CLAWED AND CRAWLED ALONG THE LISTING DECKS OF THE *CLIVEDEN* TO THE W/T OFFICE. HIS TREMBLING HAND SOUGHT THE MORSE KEY...

THE MORSE  
KEY'S SMASHED!  
I'LL HAVE TO GO ON  
TO R/T!



THIS IS THE  
*CLIVEDEN*! POSITION  
TWENTY DEGREES NORTH  
SEVENTEEN MINUTES,  
TWELVE SECONDS EAST!  
I REPEAT, POSITION....



NOW CAME THE KILL! SALVO AFTER SALVO  
RIPPED INTO THE CRUISER, CUTTING THE  
GALLANT SHIP TO PIECES.



THE GUNS OF THE PRINZ WILHELM FELL SILENT AND HER CREW LINED THE RAILS TO  
WATCH AS THE CLIVEDEN'S STERN DIPPED AND THE COLD NORTH SEA SWEEPED IN  
THROUGH HER SHATTERED  
PLATES AND BULKHEADS....





## The Crimson Sea

IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE CLIVEDEN'S WIRELESS BATTERIES BECAME WATER-LOGGED AND SILENCED THE TRANSMITTER, THAT PETER WAYMAN ABANDONED HIS POST...



THE SACRIFICE OF THE CLIVEDEN WAS NOT IN VAIN AS SHE SLID SLOWLY TO HER FINAL RESTING PLACE, HEAVY UNITS OF THE HOME FLEET APPEARED ON THE HORIZON....



## The Crimson Sea

THE SMOKE SMUDGES OF THE HOME FLEET WERE IMMEDIATELY SIGHTED BY THE GERMAN LOOK-OUTS — BUT BY THEN, IT WAS TOO LATE! THE ROYAL NAVY HAD CAUGHT THE POCKET-BATTLESHIP IN THE OPEN!

THERE ARE TWO HEAVY CRUISERS, A LIGHT CRUISER AND FOUR DESTROYERS, HERR KAPITAN! SHALL WE RUN FOR THE FIORD?

ALTER COURSE TO FACE THEM, YOU FOOL! IT'S TOO LATE TO RUN NOW!

RELENTLESSLY THE HOME FLEET CLOSED IN. THIS WAS A KILLING FORCE — A FORCE WHOSE SOLE TASK WAS TO SINK THE POCKET-BATTLESHIP, THE PRIDE OF THE GERMAN NAVY — AND TO AVENGE THE CLIVEDEN...



THERE WAS NO ESCAPE FOR THE *PRINZ WILHELM*, NO BOLT HOLE FOR HER TO RUN TO THIS TIME! UNDER THE PRECISION FIRE OF HER ATTACKERS, SHE WAS BATTERED INTO HELPLESSNESS....



LIKE ANTS THE GERMAN CREW SWARMED ON TO HER ARMOUR'D DECK, NOW ALMOST AWASH ON THE PORT SIDE, AND LEAPED INTO THE WATER, STAINED CRIMSON AND ORANGE BY THE GLARE OF THE FLAMES....



OF THE MANY HEADS THAT BOBBED IN THE OIL SLICK OF THE SINKING *PRINZ WILHELM*, NOT ALL WERE GERMAN... MORE THAN A HUNDRED SURVIVORS FROM THE *CLIVEDEN* CLUNG TO THE HEAVING TANGLE OF WRECKAGE THAT LITTERED THE SEA.



TWENTY-FOUR HOURS LATER, IN THE QUIET OF A SMALL NAVAL HOSPITAL SET IN THE GREEN FIELDS OF ENGLAND, LIEUTENANT WAYMAN, ONE OF THE LUCKY SURVIVORS OF THAT EPIC BATTLE, RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS...





WHEN THE DOCTOR VISITED DAVE, HE TOLD HIM,  
GENTLY, THAT PETER WAS MISSING . . . .





MORE THAN THREE WEEKS PASSED BEFORE DAVE WAS FIT ENOUGH TO LEAVE THE HOSPITAL AND GO TO HIS HOME ON INDEFINITE LEAVE.



THAT EVENING, DAVE AND HIS FATHER SAT TALKING OVER THE EVENTS OF THE PAST MONTHS.

PETER TOLD ME ABOUT THE GRAPNEL SINKING, DAVE - HE TOLD ME EVERYTHING! IT PREYED ON HIS MIND! HE - HE THOUGHT HE WAS A COWARD.

I KNOW HE DID, DAD! HE

WAS AFRAID OF BEING SHUT IN WITH THE SHIP GOING DOWN. BUT PETER CONQUERED HIS FEAR - AND THAT TAKES GREAT COURAGE.



WHEN DAVE WAS EVENTUALLY FIT AGAIN, HE REPORTED FOR DUTY AND WAS DRAFTED TO A DESTROYER. ONE DAY, HE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM HOME...

THE WORDS DANCED BEFORE DAVE'S EYES...

ANYTHING WRONG, OLD CHAP? NOT BAD NEWS, I HOPE?



the telegram came this morning - Peter was picked up by a German coastal vessel two days after the Geveden sank. He is in a P.O.W. Camp many. Thank God and safe your mother

THE MEMORY OF THAT LAST TERRIBLE ONE-SIDED BATTLE WAS FOR EVER BURNED IN DAVE WAYMAN'S MIND FOR IT WAS THE DAY HIS YOUNG BROTHER HAD PROVED HIMSELF WORTHY OF BRITAIN'S FINEST NAVAL TRADITION.

GOOD LUCK,  
PETER! YOU NEED  
NEVER BE ASHAMED  
AGAIN—YOU'VE TAKEN  
YOUR PLACE WITH THE  
BEST OF 'EM.

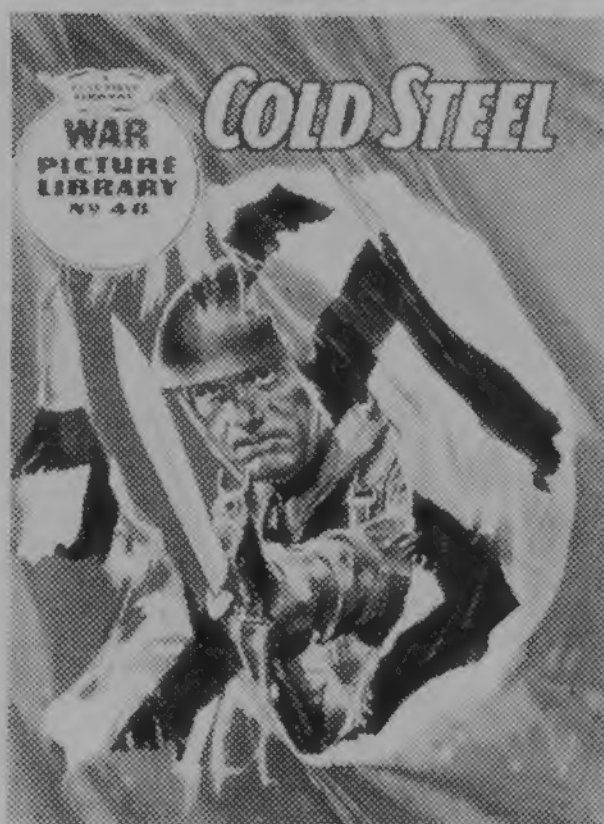


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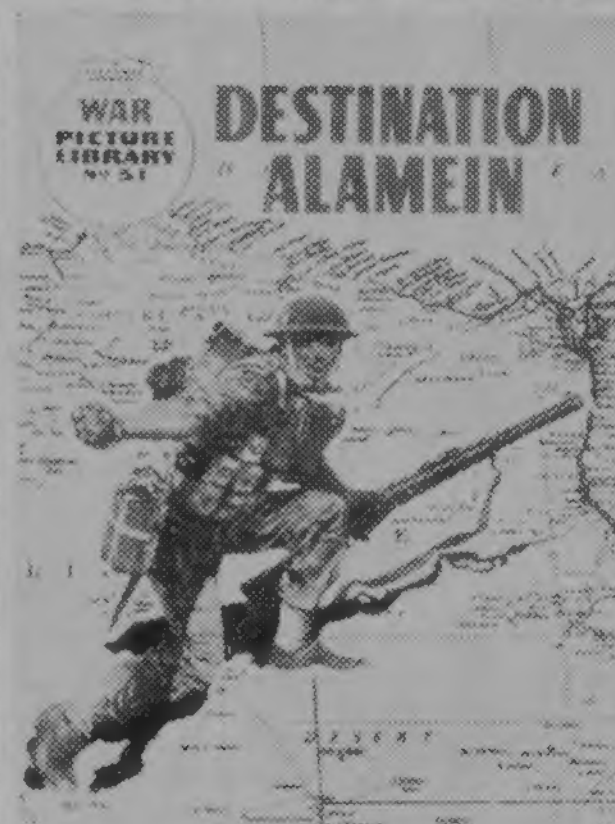
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